

# discipleship essentials

## Essentials for Spiritual Leadership Study Guide

### EXPLORING DISCIPLESHIP LESSON 4: FOLLOW-UP METHODS

#### INTRODUCTION

This lesson is part of a Discipleship Essentials module titled Exploring Discipleship. This series of lessons studies the spiritual formation of a follower of Jesus Christ – the process referred to as discipleship. The discipleship process occurs after someone comes to faith in Jesus Christ, beginning with a desire to live out God’s plan for their life. When we undertake the task of helping a new believer to grow in their faith, we are said to disciple them. This material will benefit anyone wanting to disciple others, especially those who are practising evangelism, following up with new believers and helping them grow in their faith. Discipleship is the duty of every believer, especially those in spiritual leadership!

The Study Guide is intended for an individual to look deeper into a specific lesson on their own. The lessons can be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials, such as the video and audio productions found on [www.discipleshipessentials.org](http://www.discipleshipessentials.org).



# EXPLORING DISCIPLESHIP

## LESSON 4: FOLLOW-UP METHODS

### WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

The purpose of this lesson is to help you structure a follow-up appointment with new believers so that the process of discipleship can begin.

### JUST SO YOU KNOW...

This lesson is aimed at those who will soon be discipling new believers with whom they have shared the Gospel. This is a process for which all believers should be prepared. When developing a discipling relationship, we must be careful not to treat a new believer like a project rather than a person. You can probably think of a time when someone treated you in this way – it does not help a relationship to grow. If you are engaging in any type of evangelism, you should have a clear idea of how to help a new believer begin to grow in their faith. This lesson will help you with some practical first steps.

## GETTING STARTED

1. Have you ever participated in follow-up with a new believer? What did you do? How did it go? What would you do differently next time?

2. What do you think a new believer in Christ needs most in the few weeks following their conversion?



## STUDY

- ❖ **DISCIPLING A NEW BELIEVER:** If you have been engaged in evangelism, you may have observed someone become a Christian. Once this happens, it is critical for this person to find a community of other believers where they can receive teaching and instruction.
  - If you have arrived at this point in the discipleship process with someone, you should be very excited. It means that they have understood the message of salvation and have made a decision to live their life according to their new faith in Christ!
  - You may already understand the importance of developing a relationship, praying for them and with them, and helping them connect with other believers. However, scheduling a follow-up meeting is of utmost importance. If they are a friend or someone that you are well acquainted with, this may not be considered a formal meeting, but there should be some planned structure to it.
- ❖ **THE FIRST FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENT:** It is important to ‘check in’ with a new believer within the first day or two after their decision to follow Jesus Christ. You may call this a follow-up appointment or use a less formal phrase to describe it.
  - Where would be a good spot to meet the new believer? Why is it important to follow up in the first few days?

- Have a clear objective for this appointment. There must be some planned structure for this meeting to be effective and to give the new believer specific things to think about. What do you think is a good topic to discuss within this first meeting?

- Some suggested questions to ask during the first follow-up meeting:
  - Do they understand that Christ is now the center of their life?
  - Have they thanked Christ for coming into their life?
  - Have they read John 1-3 (or another similar Bible passage)?
  - Do they have any questions?
  - Suggest another Bible passage to read, or a goal for their spiritual growth.



- Can you think of other questions that might be good to ask during that first meeting?

Depending on the individual and situation, some ideas of topics a new believer should be instructed in are:

- Assurance of salvation from the Bible
  - Their identity in Jesus Christ
  - Who Jesus Christ is, and what He desires for their life
  - The work of the Holy Spirit
  - Sin and God's design for our life
- Where can you access resources to help you teach or talk about these things with a new believer?

*Some discipleship essentials lessons might be appropriate for this purpose. You could use Study Guide materials with them, Lesson Essentials or the Leader's Guide.*

❖ **HOW YOU SHOULD BEHAVE:** Discipleship meetings – and especially the first one or two follow up meetings might sound intimidating. Ask God for courage and wisdom, and keep the following points in mind:

- Be relaxed and genuine.
  - Remember that this person is not a project.
  - Share parts of your life with them so they can get to know you too.
- Make sure that you pray together.
  - Demonstrate that prayer is a priority by praying together before you start to talk and again before you leave each other.
- Be Biblical.
  - Highlighting a few key passages each time you meet will demonstrate the importance of God's Word. It might be something you are reading or learning, or something you were taught when you were first disciplined.
  - Always go to the Bible for answers on how to live and grow in Christ.



- Don't shy away from straight talk. If there are issues that need to be addressed in the new Christian's life, don't be afraid to discuss them. Make your stand on sin clear, and help the disciple to identify any habits or behaviours they will need to change. Be willing to help them mend broken relationships or make changes in their life where needed.
- What are some behaviours or lifestyle issues you might need to address with a new believer? How can you communicate God's desire for moral living and freedom from sin? Keep in mind radical changes to life, relationships, even living arrangements will be difficult for them to make all at once.

- Be aware of the time. If the person has other obligations to keep, cut the time short.
  - Always be punctual. Set a time and stick to it.
  - Do not hurry away if the person wants to take more time. The new believer will probably be more open to talk about personal problems now than prior to the follow-up. Be open and ready.
  - Let the new believer know that you enjoyed your time together.
- Communicate your desire to meet again to talk more about God and the Christian life.
  - Set a specific time and place for the second follow-up appointment.
- ❖ **SETTING UP GROUP FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENTS:** If you have a number of people who are ready for further follow-up, you may decide to meet with them as a group. This may occur if you are sharing the Gospel with a number of people regularly who have some shared identity (such as a university campus, or within one geographical area).
  - You can use the first personal appointment as a bridge to group follow-up.
  - Without the support of other believers, very few Christians grow to spiritual maturity. It is important to involve new believers with other Christians because most of their friends are probably non-Christians.
  - Remember that how you live is a better witness than what you say. So, if there is opportunity for the new believer to be with you when you share God's Word with someone else, invite them along.
  - Always close a follow-up meeting with prayer.



- ❖ **PRAYER:** Effective follow-up with new believers requires love, reliance on God and prayer. What examples of prayer do you see in the following verses?

Philippians 1:3-6	
John 17	

### IN SUMMARY

- ❖ A disciple of Jesus Christ is one who has accepted Him as their Saviour and then spends their entire life in pursuit of being like Him at any cost
- ❖ It is important to ‘check in’ with a new believer within the first day or two after their decision to follow Jesus Christ
- ❖ Follow up appointments should have a purpose or structure. You can help them understand some basics of their faith.
- ❖ It is important to conduct yourself properly – be relaxed and genuine, pray together, and keep God’s Word central to your time together.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Where are good locations to hold follow-up appointments? What can you do to help the new believer feel comfortable?

2. How can you win the trust of the person you are discipling? What are some ways you could bond with them?